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1.

St. Paul's HERETIC:  
OR, SEVERAL  
CHARACTERISTICS  
OF AN  
HERETIC.

Collected from  
St. PAUL's Epistle to TITUS:  
Address'd to the  
Reverend Dr. STEBBING,  
And the  
Reverend Mr. FOSTER.

*Calvin Fleming*

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*Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the  
Spirits whether they are of God.— Prove  
all things: hold fast that which is good.——*

*We may therefore pay a due regard to the judg-  
ment of a Socrates, or a Plato, but TRUTH  
should always be revered by us, with the  
most hearty, and profound submission.-----*

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St. *Paul's* HERETIC:  
OR, SEVERAL  
CHARACTERISTICS  
OF AN  
HERETIC.

GENTLEMEN,

**U**PON reading the controversy lately published between you, concerning the nature of *heresy*, I was determined to sit down and read *St. Paul*, and from him form a judgment of it, in the best manner I could; being persuaded that *St. Paul* bids fairer to set me right in the sense of his own writings, than any commentator whatsoever: at least, I thought I could with more satisfaction form my ideas from *St. Paul*, than from any other inferior authority. What light I could come at in thus endeavouring to understand what he meant by an *heretic*, I have discovered in the following method,

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thod, which I humbly submit to your consideration.

My design is to consider what St. *Paul* in his epistle to *Titus* intends by an H E- R E T I C; as mentioned by him *Tit.* iii. 10. And I think it denotes, that there were some persons in the world, which in the estimation of St. *Paul* deserved such a character, *viz.* that of an *heretic*, otherwise, his advice following these words, would appear to have been very impertinent.

Again, I take it for granted, that the apostle must intend *something* by this character, as applied by him to some particular persons; but this his intention, I apprehend, could not be understood even by *Titus* himself, either from this verse, or the next, unless he had more explicitly explain'd himself before in his letter; and indeed the very form of the diction here used, implies as much, “ a  
“ man that is an *heretic*, after the first  
“ and second admonition reject, knowing  
“ that an *heretic* is subverted, and sinneth,  
“ being condemned of himself.” Which strongly refers to a character already explained, and marked out; otherwise, the description and advice appear to be very defective, and impertinent.



I shall therefore endeavour to find out the precise meaning of *St. Paul* about an *heretic* from the foregoing parts of this epistle of his to *Titus*, firmly believing that the occasion of such kind of discipline, which he here recommends *Titus* unto, must be well explain'd by him, before he would give such advice: as knowing it would no way agree with the prudence and caution of *St. Paul* that he should proceed, in so abrupt, and unintelligible a manner.

Having read over this epistle, I find that the grand design of it is, to detect and censure the conduct of some *Jewish zealots*; and to direct *Titus* what doctrines he should teach, and how he should behave, so as to frustrate the ill designs, and measures of these men, whom he at last brands with the infamous, but just character of *heretic*: from which we may perhaps learn, what are those particular marks, which unite in making up this black character.

The apostle tells *Titus* <sup>a</sup> that there were many in *Crete* who attempted all they could to corrupt the christian converts from the simplicity of the gospel institution; teaching them to lay the greatest stress on exact and nice distinctions of

<sup>a</sup> *Tit.* i. 10, 11.

meats; and drinks; <sup>a</sup> asserting, that *holiness* and *purity* absolutely depend on such observances: and this they did, under the guise and pretence of *extraordinary knowledge*; something like infallibility; <sup>b</sup> for they professed to know God, *i. e.* to be his only people, favour'd with a full and certain knowledge of his will; at the same time that both their temper, and conduct, uniformly gave the *lie* to this their profession; for by their works they shew'd that they had no such knowledge; being abominable, disobedient, and unto every good work, reprobate, *i. e.* stupid, or injudicious in it: which character the *apostle* makes to appear, by afterwards observing, that these very men taught, that the *christian institution* dissolved, and broke every civil and natural obligation, arising from the relation the christian stood in to others who were of different religious sentiments; and therefore it is, that the apostle directs TITUS to speak those things which became sound doctrine, advising to every social and relative duty: <sup>c</sup> that he should exhort christian servants, or slaves <sup>d</sup> to be equally obedient, and faithful to *heathen masters*, as they would be to *christian masters*; that hereby the chri-

<sup>a</sup> Ver. 14, 15, 16. <sup>b</sup> Ver. 16. <sup>c</sup> Ch. ii. 1,—7. <sup>d</sup> Ch. ii. 9.  
stian

stian doctrine might appear in its genuine light, as an equal, reasonable, and useful institution. On the same account, I apprehend it is, that he bids *Titus* put the christian people in mind, that christianity did not dissolve, or weaken that *subjection* which the reason of things, and the just laws of society require to princes, and magistrates; but that it demanded of all its true disciples, a due regard to every civil obligation, by which the harmony, and good order of society is supported; <sup>a</sup> infomuch, as that they should not speak evil of, or revile *any man*; no, not *an inferiour*, because he was of different sentiments from themselves; but on the contrary, <sup>b</sup> that they should treat all men, with *all meekness*, and *gentleness*, as what was absolutely incumbent on every sincere professor of christianity; and then he goes on to shew, that a contrary temper and conduct could only suit with such a state of ignorance, and vice, from which the christian revelation had effectually delivered such of them, who were become sincere converts: <sup>c</sup> to which evil dispositions, such as malice, envy, and hatred, many of them had been subject, (even himself also as a persecutor) before they embraced

<sup>a</sup> Chap. iii.    <sup>b</sup> Verse 2.    <sup>c</sup> Chap. iii. 3.

christianity. He then adds, <sup>a</sup> that the great, and evident design of christianity, was, not only to recover mankind from such vices; but also to discover to them, that every *external distinction* is insignificant, and useless, and can no way recommend men to the divine acceptance: but on the contrary that their being made *heirs* according to the hope of eternal life, thro' the mercy of God, depended on their being careful to *maintain good works*; <sup>b</sup> or as it is before express'd, on their being conducted by a *gentle, and meek temper* towards all men. He then adviseth them, to avoid and reject all foolish questions, *i. e.* such as belong not to the christian scheme, but are absolutely repugnant to it; and such were all those of these *zealots*, which respected *only* the *Jewish* traditions, pedigrees, and ceremonies; the natural tendency of which, was to raise contentions and strifes, contrary to the known laws of natural religion, and therefore could not but be subversive of the designs of real and pure christianity. Having thus pointed out these dangerous men in the church of *Crete*, and advised *Titus* how to guard against them, he proceeds to fix a stigma on such men,

<sup>a</sup> Verse 4, 5, 6, 7.    <sup>b</sup> Ver. 8.

under one single, but general appellation,  
 A MAN THAT IS AN HERETIC; *q. d.*  
 “ a man, or any man in your church at  
 “ *Crete*, that deserves such a character,  
 “ which I have so largely described, and  
 “ given you rules to guard yourself, and  
 “ others against; admonish such a man:  
 “ but if after a second earnest applica-  
 “ tion to him, he yet retains this wicked,  
 “ this hurtful disposition, reject him as  
 “ one unfit for christian society; and you  
 “ may very safely do it, because such a  
 “ one is evidently *an enemy* to all that is  
 “ good, and cannot belong to God’s fa-  
 “ mily in the relation of a child; for he  
 “ professedly, and allowedly unreins every  
 “ hurtful passion, and conducts himself on  
 “ the most destructive principles: thus he  
 “ sinneth, as one that is born of God  
 “ cannot sin, and is condemned of him-  
 “ self.” Nor can the apostle conclude  
 his epistle but by keeping his eye steady  
 on this heretic, to which character he  
 had all along had a reference, for al-  
 tho’ one might have expected, that he  
 had clos’d his design of advising about  
 these hurtful men; especially when he  
 begins, as it were, his postscript, which  
 is only a relation of whom he would send  
 to *Crete*, in order to give *Titus* leave and  
 opportunity to come and pay him a visit



at *Nicopolis*, and a direction given *Titus*, whom he should bring along with him; <sup>a</sup> just as if *St. Paul* could not pronounce his *valediction*, 'till he had again returned to his subject, he repeats the advice; <sup>b</sup> and, *let ours also learn to maintain good works*. The conjunction copulative (*and*) can have no reference at all to the verses immediately preceding, or the subject of them, *viz.* directions to *Titus* about his journey; but as if these were only a parenthesis: in the mind of *St. Paul*, we shall find that the *and* had there a strong reference: *q. d.* “ *Titus* if thou hast any  
 “ respect for me, or would see me with  
 “ pleasure, fail not to attempt to secure  
 “ the grand end of this my letter to thee,  
 “ *viz.* by exhorting such christians as are  
 “ in any danger of being deluded by these  
 “ heretics, that they learn to maintain  
 “ good works, *i. e.* be constant in the  
 “ exercise of an *undistinguished beneficence*  
 “ towards others, on all needful occasions;  
 “ being merciful, as their Father in hea-  
 “ ven is merciful; and not suffering their  
 “ *good will* to become limited, and con-  
 “ fin’d to particular sentiments and par-  
 “ ties; lest the righteous judge of men  
 “ should esteem them to belong to the

<sup>a</sup> Chap. iii. 12, 13. <sup>b</sup> Verse 14.



“ unfruitful or unprofitable: the favour of  
 “ God be with you all. Amen.”

Having thus briefly trac'd and explain'd the design of St. *Paul* in this epistle, more immediately as it respected the character under consideration, I shall in the next place more distinctly delineate, or rather copy out the *heretic* from St. *Paul*'s original,

*First*, By shewing what are his false; and, *secondly*, what are his true and genuine characteristics.

And, *first*, for any one man to receive different ideas, or form different sentiments from another, upon any speculative principle, is no part of the description of St. *Paul*'s heretic: nor indeed can it be, because whatever proposition is found, concerning which men may receive different ideas, or form different sentiments, that proposition has nothing in itself that can determine any one man *faulty* more than another; insomuch, as it will admit of such variety, among sincere and honest enquirers after the true meaning of it; for since men may differ upon a common ratio, *i. e.* as having different degrees of strength, and clearness in their intelligent faculties, and as having for the subject of enquiry, a *proposition*, which in its own nature will admit of different appre-

hensions about it; it hence follows, that that difference is occasion'd by, and consequently may be defended upon that common ratio. For instance, *six* men having received *six* different ideas of the nature of a proposition, if these *six* were careful in forming their sentiments, they are equally right; altho' none of them should happen to find out the true nature of the proposition. Or supposing that some *one* of the *six* should happen to have formed his sentiments so as to quadrate exactly with the truth of the proposition, yet since the proposition was capable of different ideas, and every one of the *six* formed the best sentiments they could about it, the different and distinct ideas of the *erring five* would be of equal value to *them*; as his ideas could be to *him* who happened right. Nor does such a proposition leave the least room for any *one* of the *six* to condemn his differing companion for that his difference, it being the unavoidable consequence of his enquiry: but each individual has equal authority to censure the sentiment that differs from his own; because *number one*, differs from *number two*, as much as *number two*, differs from *number one*, and so of the rest.

Let me add, that the consent of *ten thousand* to the truth of a proposition, don't determine any one *single dissenter* to be an *heretic*; nor will a general Opinion, be any proof of the truth of a proposition; *numbers* adding no weight to truth, for truth is but one, and is unalterable, and yet may be mistaken by ten thousand, as well as by one individual.

Neither, *secondly*, can he be an *heretic*, who dissents from the truth of any proposition, altho' of the *greatest importance* in itself, and when rightly understood; if the man so dissenting be of a benevolent temper, and conducts himself virtuously: because, the value of any principle is only proportionate to the tendency it has to promote a benevolent temper, and a virtuous conduct. For instance, no principle can be of greater importance than this, *viz.* that inherent, or personal holiness is absolutely necessary to happiness: and yet there are some who absolutely deny this; and say, that it is no qualification at all: but that *Christ Jesus* is imputatively made sanctification or holiness to all such as are saved, and that it is dangerous to regard personal obedience: at the same time some of these very men don't act in, but out of principle, and conduct themselves in such a manner, as if *personal holiness* was the *only* prerequisite

site to salvation: from hence I think, we may fairly infer, that a mere dissent from the truth of a proposition, altho' of the greatest importance, will not determine any man an *heretic*.

But, again, *orthodoxy* is generally connected with *power*, and therefore it is, that *establishments* have took place; *i. e.* some certain *tenets*, or *doctrines* have been recommended under the *ban* of *publick authority*, as a common standard of truth; to differ from which, some men have branded as *heresy*, and treated the dissenter as if he was an *heretic*. But surely nothing can be more absurd, nor can it take place in any breast, one would think, but where an uncommon ignorance, and an excess of folly characteriseth the man; for let any man but examine the history of any nation, or age of the world, and he'll soon see, that *power* and *dominion* can add no real value to any principle, or alter in the least the nature of truth; because if it could, one tenet might be a truth in *England*, the contrary of which at the very *same time*, and under the very *same authority*, is a truth in *Scotland*: one tenet may be a truth at *Rome*, which is absolutely a lie in *England*, as well as false in the nature of things. So that if *establishment* added  
any



any thing to the nature of truth, or the reason of things, the old gentleman at *Rome* might then, indeed, make a wafer into a God for ought I know; *i. e.* if the reason of things would bow the knee, and give way to authority: but, alas! the pretence is only a piece of artificial colouring,—for truth is invariable, and inflexible in its nature; so that *power* and *dominion* cannot at all influence it, nor will it admit the least alteration from any *authority* whatsoever. On the other hand, I own, that truth is much more likely to be *disguised* and *corrupted* by *power*, and *authority*, then when unassisted and unbiassed by these, it is left to make its way in the world: because, *authority* and *power* give the greatest opportunity to favour any *designs* which men may have, arising from *interests* and *views* wholly foreign to those of truth. And thus it has always been with mankind; for, where *power* and *dominion* have undertook to support principles of any kind, there has always been an invasion made on the rights of men; but never any impartial proceedings in favour of the sincere, and disinterested enquirer. Nor can it be otherwise; because *authority*, and *power* have always thrown into the balance some *advantages* in favour of those schemes

schemes which that *power* and *authority* have established: and not only so, but as if men were most earnest for supporting such authority, *discouragements* have been always added; apparently on purpose to suppress such *enquiries* as were likely to shake, or disturb the foundation of such established articles, or tenets.— Hence it appears to me, that merely to dissent from the truth of any established principles, because established by any humane authority, will not prove a man an heretic.

*Lastly*, a man's being rejected, *i. e.* excluded, or excommunicated from any christian communion, will not prove him an heretic; no, not if he was so excluded by *Titus*, or any other bishop, or even by *St Paul* himself; except the person so excluding him had undoubted evidence, that the man so excluded, was subverted, and sinned, and was condemned of himself: for such a knowledge the apostle has made the justifying reason of *Titus's* rejecting an heretic: *knowing*, says he, that he that is such, *i. e.* that is an heretic, and as such, one whom thou mayest reject, *knowing* that such an one is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself. Nor is there any thing appears more evident to me from hence, than that an *heretic* cannot be



be one whom God can approve: because no man can justly be denominated an heretic, or rejected from christian communion, as such; but one who is an undoubted enemy to truth and virtue. Hence therefore I conclude, that it is not in the power of any man, or any set of men, to make or constitute a man an heretic, by excluding him their communion: and hence I infer also, that the *Greek* word, render'd *condemned of himself*, cannot signify *one that accuses himself*, and is, or may be accused of the church, as an heretic, at the same time he may not be one in the sight of God; except we must call every innocent, sincere, and good man an *heretic*, who has had the misfortune to become a sacrifice to the pride and villainy of imperious and wicked ecclesiastics: of which unhappy number, we may reckon all those who have been *confessors* and *martyrs* to the cause of truth and virtue; whose deaths have stained the history of so many blood-thirsty priests and princes. This cannot then be the true sense of the Words; but must intend one whom *Titus* knew to be *self-condemned*; i. e. knew to be one, who could have no confidence towards God. Which *knowledge* of the hearts of men might probably be one

of those extraordinary gifts confin'd to the apostolic age.—

Having thus far given a description of the false characteristics of St. *Paul's* heretic, I shall, in the *second* place, point out some of the true and genuine ones.

And, *first*, An *heretic* is one who professeth such principles, and then practiseth upon them, which the reason of things, and the law of his own mind, must condemn; for instance, that man is an heretic who professeth to believe, that the revelation of *Jesus Christ* is from God, and yet asserts that that revelation lays more stress upon a man's observing ritual, and ceremonial distinctions in meats and drinks, or any other indifferent things, than upon the eternal laws of *justice* and *benevolence*. Thus St. *Paul's* heretic is described as having such a regard to the *Jewish* tables, respecting such things as these, as was prior to all other considerations which relate to holiness of heart and life, *Tit.* i. 14, 15. This indeed must lessen the importance of every sentiment we can form of the perfections of Deity, and confound the reason, and difference of things; but can no way consist with any reasonable disquisition.—

*Secondly*, An *heretic* is that man, who from a pretension of his being *elect*ed, or  
I
*chosen*

*chosen of God* to eternal life, asserts an *unbounded liberty* to practise every vice: <sup>a</sup> inasmuch, as such a man, cannot but know, the supreme Being is a *perfectly regular Being*, who observes inviolably the laws of *justice* and *mercy*; and that consequently, a conduct so repugnant to those perfections of Deity, cannot be any proof of God's favour towards him, or approbation of him, but the very reverse; on account of which consideration, he must needs be condemned of himself.

*Thirdly*, An *heretic* is one who pretends to acknowledge the *christian scheme* as a part of divine revelation, and yet asserts both by doctrine and practice, that it can dispense with those obligations which arise from the relations in which we stand to other beings. So *St. Paul's heretic* taught, that *servants* might refuse fidelity to their *masters*, if those their masters were of a different religion from the christian, as may be learnt from *Tit. ii. 9, 10.* by which documents they would have exposed the noblest plan of religion in the world to the utmost contempt: and not only so, but they taught also, that the christian might refuse allegiance and subjection to his *sovereign*

<sup>a</sup> *Tit. i. 16.*

*prince*, or *governour*; <sup>a</sup> hereby introducing an idea of christianity as a most hurtful scheme to the weal of society.

Nay, I add, *St. Paul's heretic* was one who taught men to speak evil of dignities; and to treat all men, of every class who differ'd from them, with *malice*, *envy*, and *hatred*: <sup>b</sup> which conduct is an evident contradiction not only to the law of *Jesus*, but to the plain reason, and nature of things also: and consequently, such a man must deserve the character *St. Paul* gives him, to wit, that of an heretic: since he is apparently subverted, *i. e.* overturned, or in a state of ruin, and destruction; sinning with such an high hand, as to leave no room for any man to doubt, but that he is condemned of himself.

Again, *St. Paul's heretics* were such who pretended to recommend their hurtful doctrines and practices under the mask of *a knowledge of God*, and acquaintance with his will; as may be learnt also from chap. i. 16. at the same time; both their temper, and conduct prov'd; that they were wholly *untaught* or unskillful in the ways of virtue. And, indeed, this has been that too successful

<sup>a</sup> *Tit.* iii. 1.    <sup>b</sup> *Ver.* 2, 3.

*device* in all ages, whereby *heresy* has made its way among the vicious, and ignorant. But how preposterous is it, for men to pretend that they *know God*, and understand his will, and are fit to instruct others in the nature of truth and virtue; when neither truth, nor virtue can be discovered to have the least place or interest in their minds, or views? but on the contrary, they appear to be abominable, disobedient, and to every good work reprobate! Would to God that men would shake off every prejudice to which they are thus enslav'd, and that they would judge of things according to their reason, and fitness, and not suffer the haughty, the imperious, the avaricious PRIEST to persuade them, that *persecution*; *i. e.* pecuniary mulcts, &c. or *massacres* and *slaughters* can afford assistance to the cause of *truth*; or should ever be esteem'd any real friends to the interest of *virtue*: but that the reverse is undoubtedly true, *viz.* that whosoever inculcates such *doctrines* are absolute strangers to the spirit and genius of Christianity, and are all the while offering sacrifice to BAAL, and not to GOD!

Finally, St. Paul's *heretic*, must have been a *very wicked man*, even an *obstinate, hardened wretch*, enslav'd to vicious pas-



passions, and appetites; yea, become perfectly callous to, and unimpressive by every rational and kind admonition: *an heretic after the second admonition reject; knowing, &c.* And indeed, nothing less than this can be intended, if we consider, that every member of society has a right to the benefits, and privileges of such society of which he is a member; unless, or until he has forfeited that right, by violating those cardinal laws on which the good order of the society is supported: the cardinal laws on which christianity is supported, is those of *charity*, and *justice* or *righteousness*: but the law of charity and justice too must have been violated by *Titus*, if he had censured, and rejected a man as an *heretic*, of whose insincerity and dishonesty he had the least reason to doubt; for this christian law, or principle, influences its subjects to *suffer long*, and *to be kind,—to think no evil,—to hope all things.—*

To make it more fully appear that nothing less than allowed and obstinate wickedness could characterize the *heretic*, I would observe, in the *first place*, that it could not be on account of the man's *prejudices*, or *prepossessions*, that *Titus* was to reject him; for then this would not only have been repugnant to the mild  
and



and forbearing spirit of christianity, but also very reverse, and contradictory to the conduct of St. *Paul* himself, who circumcised *Timothy*, <sup>a</sup> and came into several other very great concessions; becoming *all things*, to *all men* that he might win them over by benevolence, cool reasoning, and a proper degree of complaisance to those their prejudices: these were the methods he himself took to loose and untie the chains and cords with which men were bound, and never pretended to apply rigorous, or severe measures to remove them.

Much less, *secondly*, (as has been already observ'd,) could it be a mere difference in sentiment that could warrant such discipline which St. *Paul* advises *Titus* unto. No; the *apostle* could not but know better, being well assur'd that not one religious society could be form'd on any plan, either by himself, or any other, but there would yet remain a variety of sentiments among the members that composed it, pretty near equal to its numbers.

I might further remark, that altho' in the *New Testament*, *heresy* is a word made use of to signify *sect*, yet whenever it is so used merely to denominate a *sect*, or

<sup>a</sup> *Acts* xvi. 3.

*party*, it is no noxious thing, nor in the least culpable: so far from this, that St. *Paul* in 1 *Cor.* xi. 19. expressly allows, that there must be *sects*, or *heresies* among christians: and that a valuable *end* was to be answered thereby, *viz.* (*i. e.* as I understand it) that men may approve themselves true christians, by exercising that noblest *virtue* or *fruit* of the *spirit*, *viz.* *love*, or *charity* towards every differing brother. Besides, if *heresy* was of an ill signification in the usage of the *New Testament*, then christianity was whilst in its minority a noxious or hurtful thing also: for St. *Paul* says, that after the way which the world called *heresy*, so he worshipped the God of his Fathers, *i. e.* as belonging to the sect of the *Nazarenes*, and in this his *heresy*, or difference in sentiment from the *established religion* of his country, he gloried! Therefore, I take it for granted that the apostle must intend by an *heretic* in his epistle to *Titus*, nothing less than a *very wicked man*; or, one that was become unfit, by his wickedness for *christian communion*, of which he professed himself a member.

I shall in the next place, briefly enquire which way he was to reject, or, what is intended by *TITUS's rejecting* this *heretic*.

And,

And, *first*, *Titus* could not be directed to *reject* the heretic, by making the *terms* of christian communion *narrower* than what would agree with the grand design of christianity, which is a scheme of doctrines intended to include all nations, people, and languages, and to become an universal blessing to mankind; for the very excellency of this *institution* consists in its being calculated to cement societies, and to strengthen and spread friendships, so that the terms, on which it can reject any, can be only such on which men will be absolutely excluded the happiness of the *after state*; to prepare for which happiness this institution is in its whole œconomy peculiarly adapted. How preposterous then must it be for any christian to teach, that any man is disqualified, and should thereupon be excluded christian communion and fellowship here on earth, on account of some *punctilio's*, or *pretended reasons*, which heaven won't insist on as reasons or terms on which it will exclude any? One would think that this is to carry the point to an extravagant pitch of purity in discipline, and implicitly to condemn the care, the purity and regularity of the upper world.—Whereas nothing is more plain, than that the laws of admission in the church below ought

to be more lax, in proportion as men's capacities of distinguishing *sincerity* from *hypocrisy* differ from the enlarged understanding of him who has the keys of the invisible world; — men being capable of judging of one another here, no further than that rule of our Saviour's will direct them, *viz. By their fruits ye shall know them.*

Nor, *secondly*, could St. Paul mean, by advising *Titus* to reject the *heretic*, that he should exterminate, or extirpate the *heretic*: I know it is said in *Mat. vii. 19, That every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, men esteem as only fit for fuel*; — from whence some may infer the fitness of an inquisition. But I fancy we shall soon find, upon a little enquiry, that the metaphor will not bear such a transition; nor that the church ever did or could receive such *authority* from Christ, from which they might justify an extermination of heretics, altho' *obstinate vice* enters into their character. — In order to settle this point with greater certainty, let us examine what *Jesus Christ* has elsewhere expressly taught his disciples; and methinks there is no scripture more pertinent and *à propos*, than the parable he delivered concerning the *tares*, *Mat. xiii.* in which he represents his *doctrine* as the *good seed*  
that

that *he* had sown in the field of the world, which turned many to righteousness, or sprung up so, as to denominate it a field that he had sown; but the *tares* as the *seed* sown by the Devil; *i. e.* *wicked men* not regarding his doctrine.—He tells us that some of his over-officious servants, who knew not of what spirit they were of, when they saw the *tares* among the *wheat* came to him, and said, SIR, Wilt thou then that we go, and gather (or root) them up? To which their *wise and righteous master* replied, No; by no means, lest whilst ye gather up the *tares*, or what you take to be so, you root up the *wheat* also with them; let both grow together, or in the same field, till *harvest*, and in the *time of harvest*, I will direct the *reapers*, both how to separate them, and then how to dispose of them, when separated:—— which affords this plain instruction, *viz.* That the state of Christ's church, whilst here on earth, has no *reaping time* belonging to any period of it: the general resurrection, or end of the world, is the *harvest for reaping*, but begins not till then. It teaches us also, that Christ intended not to employ any of his *apostles*, or *succeeding ministers*, in the work of *houghing*, or *weeding of tares*; both *wheat* and *tares* are to grow together



'till harvest. Neither has *Christ* qualified any men whatsoever for the work; *apostles*, as well as others, might pluck up the wheat with the tares: lest whilst ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. It further informs us, that the business or work of *separating*, with its consequences, is allotted for the *angels*, who are to be the *reapers*; and to whom he will himself give proper instructions. Hence I think it is plain, that *extermination* or *extirpation* is not intended by *rejection*.—

But positively, it can only intend an exclusion from *church-fellowship*, whilst he, *i. e.* the *heretic*, continued impenitently wicked; but as in the case of the *incestuous person*, whom *St. Paul* had order'd to be excommunicated out of the *church of Corinth*, in like manner should he be treated, for as soon as he discover'd his penitency, *St. Paul* becomes his advocate, and pleads not only that the church would forgive him, but that they would also express due care to *comfort* him, lest his *sorrow* should press too hard upon him, and *Satan* get thereby an advantage, *i. e.* lest he should lose the command of his passion, or the exercise of his reason, and fall into despair: in which circumstances



every rational address might have been lost upon him<sup>a</sup>.

I confess I cannot deny, but that St. *Paul's* heretic, as described by him, might make himself the head of a party with a vile design, or from base ends, such as wordly interest, &c. according to *Tit. i. 11. Teaching things which he ought not for filthy lucre's sake.* But I rather think, that altho' this gives us the *spring*, and *motive* of his action, yet it does not fully convey to us an idea of the make, constitution and frame of the man, so described by St. *Paul* as an *heretic*: nevertheless, lust of riches, or power, and dominion, enter so far into the character of an *heretic*; that I question whether it is possible for any man to deserve the character, that is not actuated by these, as the grand principles of his action: so that wherever such vices prevail in any man, that man is to be suspected as having the *fundamentals* of an heretic.——

From the whole, I would conclude, that an *heretic*, if there be any such among christians now, is one, who would wickedly impose or practise upon any scheme, subversive of the right of private judgment, and destructive of the welfare of

<sup>a</sup> Compare 1 *Cor.* v. with 2 *Cor.* ii.

society. And, indeed, where men boldly assert their sentiments to be infallibly right, and condemn all such as differ from them; these bid fair for the character, inasmuch as they lay a sufficiently wide foundation for the induction of every evil and hurtful disposition and practice.

Whoever therefore would *merit* the character St. *Paul* gives of an heretic; let him indulge to ill-nature, anger, passion, pride, and hatred; let him treat his fellow creatures who differ from him with fury, and resentment; let him resolve to abridge every man of his liberty who thinks not as he does; and let him reject any such, *i. e.* expel him from his religious society, as a *schismatic*, altho' he expresses in a strong light the *temper* and *virtues* of the christian character; yea, let him curtail, at least, if not further persecute him in his property: thus shall he richly deserve the title of *heretic*, and become a fit object of the contempt of every sincere and genuine disciple of *Jesus*.

But on the contrary, if any man would *avoid* the character of an heretic, let him be clothed with humility, let him always express a *gentle* and *meek disposition* towards all men; not daring to censure, condemn, or persecute for the sake of difference in sentiment; but as becomes a true christian,  
let

let him keep the unity of the spirit in, or by the bond of peace: being convinced, that the *unity of the spirit* is to be kept no other ways, than by the exercise of universal charity and benevolence; that *uniformity of worship*, has never yet secured the unity of the spirit, nor never will; and that *unanimity in sentiments* is too idle a dream, to have ever yet obtained any certain existence, among any sort of religionists: but as he sees that it is impossible, in the nature of things, that these should secure the unity of the spirit; let him practise upon the method revelation has prescribed, that is, by securing the *bond, cement, or tie* of a peaceable or benevolent disposition, which, whoever expresses, cannot be an *heretic*, because he in reality keeps *the unity of the spirit*.

*Lastly*, I apprehend that more especially the principles of the ROMISH CHURCH, her *maxims*, and her *spirit* exactly tally with St. Paul's heretic. — Let then every true christian, as he would adorn the doctrine of *God his Saviour*, avoid her as a subverted, sinning, and self-condemned communion. — And endeavour to support the interest of PROTESTANTISM, which is the interest of true christian liberty, by constantly breathing the spirit of the gospel, and giving proof of it  
to

to all men, by an unbounded benevolence.

And now, GENTLEMEN, having given you the best account of a *heretic* I could collect from St. Paul's letter to *Titus*, I humbly beg leave as a conclusion, to offer one word of advice; which is this, that since you are both publicly employ'd in recommending the doctrines of christianity to mankind, that you would constantly discover in all your debates, that *truth* and *virtue* are your chief aim; and that your highest ambition is to emulate in benevolence: for *pride*, *arrogance*, or a *lust of dominion* over the judgments, or consciences of men, are such vices that wherever they are discovered, will betray a *spirit* unacquainted with the genius of the christian institution. Therefore as you wish well to the true interest of christianity, and would not share the character of heretics yourselves, speak no evil one of another; but be gentle, shewing *all-meekness* unto all men: and so far as this temper governs your views, and actions, all *good men* will wish you prosperity; as well as he sincerely does, who is,

GENTLEMEN,

Your Humble Servant,

PHILALEUTHEROS.

F I N I S.









